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MASSIVE EXPLOSION AT IRANIAN PORT KILLS 5, INJURES OVER 700

A massive explosion rocked a port in southern Iran on Saturday, killing five people and injuring more than 700 others. The explosion was linked to the shipment of a chemical ingredient used to make missile propellant. The blast at the Shahid Rajaei port happened as Iran and the United States met Saturday in Oman for the third round of negotiations over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear programme | **P9**

EXPERT

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AMOLYA KAMATH
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■ U.N. BODY CALLS FOR ACTION AGAINST TERROR BACKERS ■ IRAN PREZ DIALS MODI TO CONDEMN ATTACK

Massacre draws UNSC's strong condemnation

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

THE United Nations Security Council has "condemned in the strongest terms" the brutal terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, calling it "a reprehensible act of terrorism" and stressing the urgent need to bring the "perpetrators, organisers, financiers, and sponsors" of the April 22 massacre to justice.

In a press statement, the 15-member body expressed deep condolences to the families of the victims. "Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security," the statement read.

The UNSC reiterated that such acts are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of the motive, location, or identity of those responsible adding that the perpetrators must be brought to book.

The members called on all countries to fulfil their obligations under international law

PAK PM SAYS OPEN TO JOIN NEUTRAL PROBE

Lahore: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday offered to join any 'neutral and transparent' probe into the Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed 26 people

and Security Council resolutions by cooperating with relevant authorities to hold those involved accountable.

The statement, delivered by the rotating president of the UNSC on behalf of all members—including Pakistan, currently a non-permanent member—highlighted the need to "combat by all means" threats to global peace arising from terrorism, in line with the UN Charter.

India has directly linked the Pahalgam attack to Pakistan stressing on the cross-border linkages to the assault and announced a series of punitive diplomatic and strategic measures. These include suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, the expulsion of Pakistani mili-

tary attachés, the immediate closure of the Attari land-transit post and stopping visas to Pakistani nationals.

Reacting swiftly, Pakistan closed its airspace to Indian airlines and halted all trade with India, including through third countries and announced putting on all bilateral agreements in abeyance. Islamabad also termed India's move to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty as a "grave provocation," warning that attempts to disrupt water flows to Pakistan under the 1960 pact would be considered an "act of war."

After the Pahalgam terror strike that killed 26 people—25 tourists and one local—tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours have spiked, drawing both international attention and concern.

While the UNSC did not call out Pakistan, the firm language came as a signal of intolerance for cross-border terrorism.

Meanwhile, President of Iran Masoud Pezeshkian dialled Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday and condemned the terror attack in Pahalgam.



Free tea, biscuits, water bottles being distributed in Lal Chowk | ZAHOR PUNJABI

KASHMIRIYAT MAKES TOURISTS FEEL SAFE

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

WHILE the Pahalgam terror attack has created a sense of insecurity among tourists, several people visiting the Kashmir Valley said they were moved by the support and solidarity extended by the locals, adding that they feel safe in J&K.

Vaishali, a tourist from Delhi, said she is not feeling any tension or fear. "Initially there was fear after the Pahalgam attack. But now we are moving freely without any fear or threat. We visited Gulmarg, Sonamarg and Lal Chowk. People here are very hospitable and helpful," she said. Her family members are also set to visit Kashmir. "We told them that there is no need to worry and the situation is good here. People should not cancel their scheduled visits to Kashmir," she said.

Another tourist, Hemant, said the hoteliers, cab drivers, horse riders all have been very supportive.

Meanwhile, traders in Lal Chowk distributed free refreshments and food to tourists as a goodwill gesture.

Pak resorts to firing along LoC

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

THE Army has been put on high alert to deal with any exigency at the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir as tensions flared up at the border on Saturday after Pakistani troops fired at Indian posts in many sectors in Kashmir for the second successive night.

A defence official said on the night of April 25-26, Pakistani troops breached border ceasefire agreement and carried out unprovoked firing from multiple posts across the LoC in Kashmir. "Multiple Indian posts were targeted by the Pakistani troops. Indian troops responded appropriately," he said. There were no casualties or injuries, an officer said. The firing on Indian army posts has come days after militants attacked tourists at Baisaran meadows in Pahalgam.

On Saturday, banned terror outfit The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy for the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), after initially taking the responsibility, issued an online statement denying its involvement in the terror attack. Sources said the TRF denial has come under pressure from the Pakistani establishment and in view of the protest by Kashmiris.



REST IN PEACE

Pope Francis' coffin is carried in front of dignitaries, including US President Donald Trump, at his funeral in Vatican on Saturday | **AP | P9**

HC issues notices to state govt, KEA on janivara row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka High Court issued notices to the state government and Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) on a petition that students were forcibly made to remove their sacred thread (janivara) before writing the Common Entrance Test (CET) this year.

The division bench of Chief Justice NV Anjaria and Justice KV Aravind heard the public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Raghunath, president of the Akhila Karnataka Brahmana Mahasabha, on Saturday.

The petitioner pleaded before that necessary orders be given to conduct CET again for those students who were not allowed to appear for the test. They argued that the action of the respondents (state government and KEA) is violative of fundamental rights of the students.

The petitioner said the CET for various professional courses was held across the state on April 16 and 17. Before entering the examination hall, students were checked and those who were wearing the sacred thread were forced to remove it. In some extreme cases, the janivaras were cut, despite the students protesting, the petitioner said.

Those who refused to remove it were denied the opportunity to write the test. Such incidents reportedly occurred in Bidar, Shivamogga, and Dharwad districts, the petitioner claimed.

CONTINUED ON P5

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